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Aruba's National Day coming up Sunday, March 18

The grand one-year celebration of the silver anniversary of Status Aparte, Aruban autonomy within the Dutch Kingdom, will come to close this coming Saturday and Sunday, March 17 and 18, with two days of events.

Aruba's National Day is also known as "Himno y Bandera," or "Anthem & Flag" Day, as it was ten years prior to attaining Status Aparte that Aruba's official flag and anthem "Aruba Dushi Terra" were inaugurated, on March 18, 1976.

The festivities will begin on Saturday, March 17, with



Obama vows 'full force' of law in Afghan shooting



Afghan protesters shout anti-US slogans as they carry an effigy of US President Barack Obama during a demonstration in Jalalabad today.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama Tuesday sought to calm outrage over a massacre of civilians by a US soldier in Afghanistan, telling Afghans he took it as seriously as if Americans had been slaughtered.

Obama promised that the culprit for the rampage which killed 16 civilians, mostly women and children, in a methodical house-to-house kil-

ling spree, would face the "full force" of US law.

The president also sent a clear signal that the incident, the latest in a string of reverses for US policy in Afghanistan, would not deflect his plans for a responsible withdrawal and continued fight against Al-Qaeda.

Obama told President Hamid Karzai that "the United States takes this as seriously as if it was our own

citizens and our own children who were murdered."

"We're heartbroken over the loss of innocent life. The killing of innocent civilians is outrageous and it's unacceptable. It's not who we are as a country, and it does not represent our military."

Obama said he had directed the Pentagon to spare no effort in a full investigation, into why a US army sergeant and veteran of three tours of Iraq, apparently left his base and mounted a lone killing spree.

"I can assure the American people and the Afghan people that we will follow the facts wherever they lead us, and we will make sure that anybody who was involved is held fully accountable with the full force of the law."

Obama's decision to address the incident in a statement in the White House Rose Garden devoted to trade issues, appeared to underline deep US concern about the possibility of reprisals against American forces for the outrage.

a service at the 18th of March Memorial on L.G. Smith Boulevard, across from the Wilhelmina Park, officially beginning with the arrival of Governor Fredis Refunjol, just before 6:00 PM. This will last until approximately 8:00 PM from which island dignitaries will join the public for the Cultural Event at

the Plaza Betico Croes, informally starting at 6:00 PM.

The Cultural Event will be exceptionally large and varied this year, with booths offering food, refreshments and handicrafts taking up not only the Plaza Betico Croes, but the Plaza Simon Bolivar as well.

Continue on pg 2



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Ex-Murdoch aide Brooks, husband arrested in hacking probe

LONDON (AFP) - British police investigating phone hacking re-arrested former Rupert Murdoch aide Rebekah Brooks on Tuesday and detained her husband, a close friend of Prime Minister David Cameron, reports said.

Brooks and her husband Charlie were reportedly among six people arrested at dawn on suspicion of perverting the course of justice by officers probing the scandal at Murdoch's now-closed tabloid, the News of the World.

"The co-ordinated arrests were made between approximately 5am (0500 GMT) and 7am this morning," London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

The 43-year-old Brooks resigned as chief executive of Murdoch's British newspaper unit, News International, in July, ending a stellar career which saw her edit both the News of the World and its daily sister paper The Sun.

She quit just three days before being arrested for the first time on suspicion of the illegal hacking of mobile phone voicemails and bribing public officials. She has always denied any wrongdoing.

News International confirmed to AFP that two current "non-editorial" staff had been arrested, identifying one of them as its head of security, Mark Hanna, but declining to name the other.

The company and Brooks's spokesman David Wilson were both unable to confirm reports in the British media that Rebekah and Charlie Brooks were among those arrested.

Brooks and her husband, a racehorse trainer, live in a wealthy area of rural Oxfordshire near Cameron, who has described Charlie Brooks as a "good friend" whom he has known since his schooldays at the elite Eton College.

The arrests will likely be embarrassing for the prime minister, who flew to Washington on Tuesday for talks with President Barack Obama.

Cameron's spokeswoman refused to comment, saying: "It's an operational matter for police."

Murdoch shut down the News of the World in July after evidence emerged of widespread phone hacking at the tabloid, but his British newspapers continue to be dogged by allegations they covered up the practice.

Aruba's National Day coming up Sunday, March 18

Continued from pg 1

The official show will begin with the entrance of Governor Refunjol and Prime Minister Mike Eman.

The full program of island singers and dancers will include a presentation by the winner of the Annual Patriotic Song Competition and will finish with a performance by noted island baritone Edjean Semeleer, followed by a spectacular laser light show at approximately 11.15 PM.

The formal March 18 ceremony in Oranjestad will be conducted in front of Aruba's Government House on L.G. Smith Boulevard on Sunday. It will commence at 9:10 AM with the arrival of Governor Refunjol, accompanied by the Governor of Curacao, Frits Goedgedrag. Prime Minister Mike Eman will address the gathering, and Choral Group "Tuti Frutti" under the direction of Maybelline Arends-Croes and accompanied by Johnny Croes and his orchestra from the Rufo Wever Music School, will perform the national anthem.

The formal ceremony will end at approximately 10:15 AM, followed by a parade of uniformed organizations such as Scouting Aruba, schools, sports and church groups along with various government and military corps. Organizations and foundations of any kind are welcome to participate; inscription to do so closes Thursday, March 15; interested parties should inquire at the Government House in Oranjestad.

This year, San Nicolas will also be host to a National Day celebration and parade, taking place in the open lot adjacent to the main bus terminal. The ceremony will begin at 5:00 PM and will in-



(FILES) Prime Minister and wife arrive on foot to greet people along the way



clude an address by Aruba's Minister of Finance, Communications, Utilities & Energy, along with that of the Prime Minister, followed by the uniformed parade and a

performance by local group Rincon Boyz.

All are welcome to attend and enjoy the celebration of Aruba's National Day.

By Rosalie Klein



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Empowering Arubans-Consumer Conference begins tomorrow evening

The first Aruba Consumer Conference, an initiative from the Ministry of Social & Economic Affairs, will conduct the first session tomorrow evening in the Renaissance Convention Center beginning at 6:00 p.m.; registration opens at 5:30 and entrance is free.

Minister of Social & Economic Affairs and Culture, Michelle Hooyboer-Winklaar will open the presentations with a welcome, and discussion of obtaining a fair, safe and sustainable future for Aruban consumers.

Guest Keynote Speaker is Bart Combée, President Consumentenbond, the Consumers Association in the Netherlands. He will discourse on "Consumer Empowerment," advising that consumers are not powerless and what they can do to improve their situation with the tools available and how to use them. He proposes that strong consumer movement can make a difference and will t some examples of how advocacy works for them.

Other presenters include: Jeannot de Cuba, Litigator and partner VanEps Kunne- man VanDoorne, Suhailah



Maduro, Advisor at the Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce & Industry and Luciano Maduro, Head of Consumer Section at Bureau of Rent & Consumer Affairs. They will speak on Knowing your Consumer Rights, Price Control Policy, and Consumer Awareness & Enforcement of Consumer Protection Legislation, respectively.

The Consumer Conference will continue on Friday evening, March 16 under the

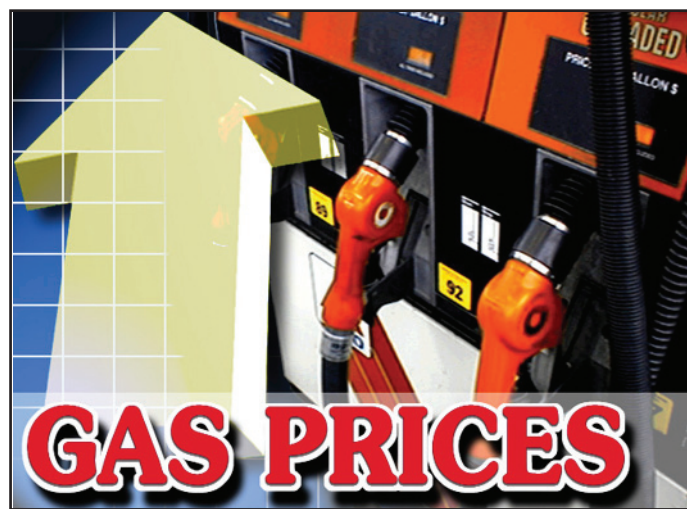
umbrella of Improving Consumer Financial Protection. Presentations will include: Consumer Financial Rights: Guidelines to Fair Financial Services- the Role of Standards in Providing Consumer Financial Protection, Good to Know Banking & Lending Practices-Consumer Smart Choices, Supervision of the financial System and More and More Debts in Aruba! How do we deal with this?

Those wishing to gain better control of their finances and understanding their rights as consumers are urged to attend and learn from the conference, as stated before, entrance is free. "It is the Government of Aruba's goal to work with the business community, and consumer advocacy groups to ensure that Aruban Consumers have access to safe and sustainable goods and services, know and exercise their individual rights as consumers, and are armed with as much information as possible so that they may understand their options as consumers."

For more information and updates, visit the conference website: consumerday.aw.

Rosalie Klein

Change in oil product prices



ORANJESTAD – The Department of Information (BUVO) informs the general public that, as of today, **March 14, 2012** the prices of different oil products will change.

Gasoline unleaded-premium 242,1 cent pa liter
+ 12.2 cents

Diesel LS 217,4 cent pa liter
+ 8.0 cents

Kerosine 212,3 cents per liter
+ 6.7 cents

The Ministry of Economic, Social and Culture Affairs also informs that the government has maintained the reduction of excise duty to absorb the increase of price of May 2007. The abovementioned prices include BBO taxes.



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SETAR N.V. supports Mi Por Foundations for youngster with Cerebral Palsy



SETAR N.V., Aruba's national telecommunications company, announced yesterday it has established a special SMS texting program allowing subscribers to donate to the local foundation Mi Por, which helps children from infant to 18 years who have Cerebral Palsy.

Mi Por Founder and Coordinator Joase - Ann van der Biest made the announcement on Monday afternoon, March 12, at SETAR headquarters in Sabana Blanco. Monday marked the commencement of a 3-month campaign, during which cell phone owners can send a text to 221 with the words, "Mi Por" and donated 5 Aruban florins (\$2.85) to the foundation. There is no additional charge for the text and Mi Por receives 100% of the proceeds.

Mi Por provides physical

therapy and mentally stimulating activities for island youngsters born with Cerebral Palsy, as well as information and counseling for parents. Their ultimate goal is to acquire or build an after school center providing spe-

cial care and therapy.

For more information about the foundation and the program, or to make a donation, contact Joase-Ann at joaseannvanderbiest@yahoo.com or visit the SETAR website: www.setar.aw.

No salads, shellfish and watermelon: queen's travel tips

LONDON (AFP) - Contracting a nasty stomach bug is par for the course when visiting new places but Queen Elizabeth II has developed a simple formula to stay well when abroad, a British lawmaker revealed recently.

"I once asked a courtier how she did it. To which I received the characteristic reply: 'By not eating salads, shellfish and watermelon while travelling'," Peter Tapsell told the House of Commons.



He was speaking during a discussion about the queen's diamond jubilee this year, during which Prime Minister David Cameron paid tribute to the monarch's "unerring grace, dignity and decency"

Brand new slot machines at Stellaris Casino

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Brand new slots

Only at the Stellaris Casino you can find the most brand new and latest tech savvy slot machines. Joining the flock of 530 machines at the largest casino in Aruba, Stellaris launches twenty one brand new exciting machines from ACS: the FreakShow, Fish-party and Inca Cash slots. All feature the 40, 50 & 100 lines, offering up to ten free games. Innovative Wheel of Fortune, featuring bonus events, delivers excitement of wheel spins and great game play.

More new machines are on its way, including the famous Sex and the City Big

Diamonds and real Multiplay slots, sequel of the award winning-Sex and the City slots. The combination of unique game play and interactive bonuses will entertain fans of the original game and new players alike. Players will experience even more glitz and glamour on the casino floor.

"We are very excited to be the first casino in Aruba to welcome brand new machines from ACS. The machines are fun to play, and feature amazingly clear graphics and exciting bonus events! At the Aruba Marriott and Stellaris Casino, it is extremely important to us that our guests have the opportunity to try some of the newest machines in the market, and in this case, in the world! That is why we are committed to updating our slot floor consistently throughout the year," says Casino General Manager Robert Guidice.

To stay updated with the upcoming specials and promotion, please visit the Stellaris Casino Facebook page or www.stellariscasino.com to stay updated.

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Loyal visitors honored at the Divi Aruba Beach Resort



Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a very nice couple and a very lovely lady, whom are loyal and friendly visitors of Aruba at the Divi Aruba Beach Beach Resort, as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of

Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10 to 19 consecutive years.

The honorees are Mr. Gregory and Mrs. Barbara Giammalvo and Mrs. Theresa Duly.

Both the couple Giammalvo and Mrs. Duly are loyal guests at the Divi Aruba Beach Resort and they love

the Island very much because of the friendly people who live and work here, the climate, beaches, restaurants and all other activities that the island has to offer. The certificate was presented by Mr. Ernest Giel representing the Aruba Tourism Authority together with Mr. Steve representing the Divi Aruba Beach Resort.

APA N.V. to Participate in Largest Cruise Convention for 19th Year

ORANJESTAD — Aruba Ports Authority will participate at the 2012 Seatrade

Miami Cruise Convention for the 19th consecutive year.

For over 20 years Cruise Shipping Miami continues to be the leading international exhibition and conference serving the cruise industry, bringing together suppliers and buyers for a week of networking sourcing and education.

A broad range of industry players with over 1,800 cruise line owners and operators from 66 companies in attendance in 2011. During the 2012 event the Aruba Ports Authority will seek to showcase its services to an audience of influential buyers and decision makers who at-

tend the conference.

This year the port will celebrate the many years of participation by showing of their new booth especially designed by Skyline. The display was designed with the theme of its new marketing initiatives in mind "A New Dawn".

The display colors were kept in perfect combination with the port's corporate color, look and feel.

In addition to this new look, the booth is strategically mapped among larger participants such as Holland. In the spirit of being a good partner we have also invited local partners to join us at our new stand and display their products and services as well.



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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

International News

Mexican parties make presidential picks official

MEXICO CITY (AFP) - Mexico's conservative ruling National Action Party (PAN) and leftist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) made their presidential picks official Sunday, with the loser of a narrow 2006 vote making another try.

With the July 1 presidential election fast approaching, the PRD's Manuel Lopez Obrador, 58, who lost the 2006 race to now President Felipe Calderon by less than one percent, locked in his candidacy arguing that a vote for the PAN now would be "agreeing to allow violence to continue which has grown mainly out of the failure of economic growth."

Lopez Obrador pledged to "purge the government of corruption from top to bottom."

The PAN's Josefina Vazquez Mota, 51 -- its first female presidential standard-bearer -- also addressed sky-

high rates of violence and murder in much of the country as drug cartels battle to control their turf and income.

A former social affairs and also ex-education minister, she told supporters at Blue Stadium here she would work to bring justice and peace to the country "for a Mexico of safety for our children."

Playing up her own humble origins, Vazquez Mota said Mexico should be "inclusive and free of discrimination."

Leading in the polls however is the PRI's Enrique Pena Nieto, 45; he made his candidacy official on Monday. The Institutional Revolutionary Party ruled Mexico for more than 70 years.

Pena Nieto, a photogenic politician with a soap-opera star wife has enjoyed plenty of media coverage since he announced he would stand last year.

But he also made slips in early campaigning, including struggling to name three books that influenced him and admitting that he did not know the price of a kilo of tortillas.

Pena Nieto has insisted that his party, which governs in the majority of Mexico's states, has no ties to drug lords, calling such accusations "propaganda" from political rivals.

A recent survey by pollsters Mitofsky gave Pena Nieto, a former governor of Mexico state, 40 percent of the vote trailed by Vazquez Mota with 25 percent and Lopez Obrador with 17 percent.

The future of a military crackdown on drug gangs started by Calderon five years ago and involving some 50,000 troops, is a key concern among voters with more than 50,000 people killed since then and violence spreading to new areas.

Israel and Islamic Jihad agree to Gaza truce

GAZA CITY (AFP) - Israel and militants in Gaza began observing an Egyptian-brokered truce on Tuesday after four days of violence, which officials on both sides warned could flare up again.

The ceasefire was holding after more than 72 hours of cross-border fighting in which 25 Gazans were killed, most of them militants, and 200 rockets were fired at Israel.

Under the deal, both Israel and militants from Islamic Jihad, who were responsible for the lion's share of the rocket attacks, agreed to hold their fire.

More than 15 hours later, the nascent truce appeared to be largely holding, although Israeli police said eight rockets and mortar shells had landed, without causing injury or damage.

And the skies over Gaza remained calm.

Home Front Defence Minister Matan Vilnai confirmed Israel had reached an unwritten "understanding" with militant groups in Gaza and was now watching to see it was being observed.

"Apparently things are calming down and this round of confrontations appears to be behind us," he told public radio.

His words were echoed by Defence Minister Ehud Barak: "This morning the situation is relatively quiet," he told reporters.

In Gaza, an Islamic Jihad spokesman said the radical group was willing to respect the deal, but Israel must end its targeted killings of militants.

Both parties warned, however, that the agreement would be short lived if the other side stepped out of line.

Senior Israeli defence ministry official Amos Gilad told reporters the deal had been concluded with Egypt, without direct contact with Gaza's Hamas rulers.

Egypt has been involved in brokering numerous truce agreements between Israel and Gaza militant groups, but a Hamas MP on Monday accused Cairo of using Gaza's ongoing fuel crisis to put pressure on the Islamist movement to enforce a ceasefire on the ground.

Gaza has just one power plant, which shut down three times in the past two months due to fuel shortages, although Egypt has agreed to provide enough fuel to allow it to operate.

The current round of violence kicked off on Friday with Israel's assassination of the head of the radical Popular Resistance Committees (PRC).

The strike prompted militants to fire hundreds of rockets and mortar rounds into southern Israel, wounding people and prompting the closure of schools within firing range of Gaza.

US urged to cancel Russia arms deal over Syria

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US senators are urging the Pentagon to cancel a contract with a Russian company approaching \$1 billion to buy helicopters for Afghanistan, voicing outrage over Moscow's arming of Syria.

"US taxpayers should not be put in a position where they are indirectly subsidizing the mass murder of Syrian civilians," 17 senators across party lines wrote Monday in a letter to Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

The United States plans to buy 21 Mi-17 helicopters for the Afghan military from Russia's Rosoboronexport by 2016. The contract totals \$375 million by 2016, with an option to buy \$550 million worth

more, according to the letter.

Russia has refused to stop arms shipments to Syria and has offered diplomatic support to President Bashar al-Assad as he puts down a year-long revolt that activists say has killed more than 8,500 people, mostly civilians.

The senators voiced alarm at reports that Rosoboronexport has shipped arms to Syria and that Syrian forces used Russian weapons in opposition stronghold Homs.

Activists recently said the throats of 47 women and children were slit in a massacre in Homs, following a month-long bombardment of the rebellious Baba Amr neighborhood where 700 people were said to have died.

State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland did not take a position on the senators' letter but said the contract would upgrade the Russian-made fleet that forms the backbone of Afghanistan's fledgling military.

President Barack Obama hopes that Afghan forces can take care of their own security to allow US forces to leave by the end of 2014, ending an increasingly unpopular war launched more than a decade ago after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The task has become even more urgent amid outrage over a US soldier's massacre of 16 Afghan villagers.

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Argentina court okays abortion in cases of rape

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) - In a groundbreaking decision for the Catholic country, Argentina's Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed that women can have an abortion if they fall pregnant after being raped.

"In these cases, doctors will no longer need a court approval. They will just need a statement from the victim or her lawyer testifying that she became pregnant as a result of being raped," the court said in its unanimous ruling.

The Latin American nation's highest court was backing the decision of a provincial court from southern Chubut "which in March 2010 authorized an abortion for the young A.G, who was 15, and who had become pregnant after being assaulted by her step-father," the ruling said.

Until now, abortions were only allowed in Argentina -- where 91 percent of people say they are Catholic -- if women were judged to be mentally ill.

The supreme court president, Ricardo Lorenzetti, stressed however that the ruling "would not open the way" towards legalizing abortions, which is a decision within the purview of the Congress.

Justice Minister Julio Alak emphasized that the government did not intend to put forward any draft legislation to legalize abortion, saying it was "an issue which requires deep debate."

Opposition lawmakers backed by women's groups are hoping the issue of abortion will be debated by Congress this year.

According to pro-choice groups, about 700,000 illegal abortions are carried out every year in Argentina. The health ministry has said the figure stood at 470,000 in 2009. About 100 women a year are said to die during the procedure.

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Guatemalan gets 6,060 years prison for 1982 massacre

GUATEMALA CITY, (AFP) - A Guatemalan court here sentenced a former elite special forces member to 6,060 years in prison for his role in the slaughter of 201 farmers in 1982, one of the worst atrocities in Guatemala's civil war.

Guatemala's First Court B of High Risk late Monday sentenced ex-military instructor Pedro Pimentel to 30 years

prison for each person killed during the raid on the Dos Erres village between December 6 and December 8, 1982.

He was given an additional 30 years prison for committing crimes against humanity.

Pimentel, 54, was extradited in July from the United States, where he had been working in a sweater factory in Santa Ana, California.

The extraordinarily long sentence is largely symbolic because the maximum time in prison allowed under Guatemalan law is 50 years.

Pimentel is the fifth former soldier to be convicted in the massacre. The other four were sentenced in August to more than 6,000 years in prison each.

Pimentel is a former instructor for the elite "Kaibiles" military unit, which was sent to Dos Erres searching for 40 rifles stolen by guerrillas. The massacre occurred during the 1982-1983 dictatorship of General Efraim Rios Montt.

In his final statement to the judges, Pimentel denied his role in the killing. The evi-

dence against Pimentel however included testimony from two fellow soldiers who participated in the raid.

Twelve other members of the army patrol linked to the massacre are hiding.

Guatemala's bitter 1960-1996 civil war claimed about 200,000 lives, according to United Nations figures.



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Health & Living

Spanish doctors announce world first in fetal surgery



BARCELONA (AFP) - Spanish doctors said Tuesday they have carried out the world's first successful operation on a fetus to unclog a blocked bronchial tube.

Doctors from two Barcelona hospitals -- Clinic and Joan de Deu -- introduced an endoscopy through the mouth of the fetus to clear the right bronchi, the air tube leading from the trachea to the lungs, and reconnect it with the central airways.

"It is an extremely delicate operation since it is carried out near the heart on tissues as thin as cigarette paper. But without this fetal therapy, the baby would not have survived," said the head of the maternal-fetal medicine department at Hospital Clinic, Eduard Gratacos.

The fetus was suffering from a bronchial atresia, a relatively common condition which affects one fetus in 10,000.

The operation, carried out in 2010 by staff from Barcelona's Clinic and Sant Joan de Deu hospitals, lasted just 30 minutes but was very delicate as it was carried out on a 26-week-old fetus weighing just 800 grams (28 ounces).

"In such cases, you have to operate quickly, like a bank robbery," said Gratacos.

Eleven weeks after the pioneering surgery was carried out baby Alaitz -- which means "joy" in the Basque language -- was born weighing 2.5 kilogrammes (5.5 pounds).

"She is completely normal" the baby's 33-year-old mother, Monica Corominas, told a news conference at the Hospital Clinic as Alaitz, who is now 16-months-old, played nearby under the watch of her father Marco.

"It was the only option. We either tried it or put an end to the pregnancy."

Russia HIV infections rise 5% in 2011: official

MOSCOW (AFP) - Russia in 2011 saw a rise of five percent in the number of new HIV infections to 62,000 cases amid worrying signs that heterosexuals and women are increasingly at risk, its chief doctor said Monday.

"In 2011, 62,000 new infections were recorded in the country," said Gennady Onishchenko, the head of Russia's sanitary protection agency, quoted by Russian news agencies.

He said that over 600,000 cases of HIV infection had been recorded in Russia since 1987, although this number is far lower than an estimate by the United Nations that 980,000 people have been infected with the virus in Russia.

He expressed concern that women were increasingly being exposed to the virus and said that in 13 regions of Russia more than half of HIV infections were of women.

Onishchenko said that transmission of the virus between heterosexuals was on the rise and now accounted for 39.9

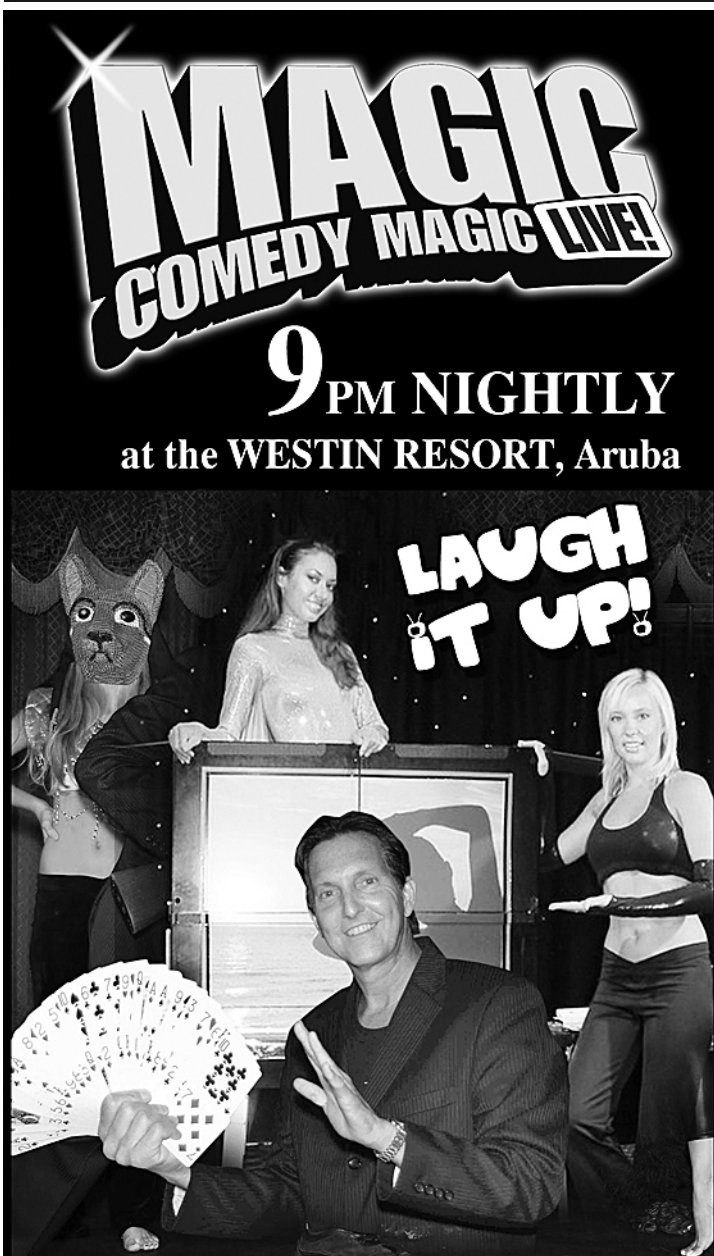
percent of infections. However most new infections, 57.6 percent, were still caused in intravenous drug injections.

Russia has long been criticised by international agencies for failing to spend money properly on anti-HIV programmes and not targeting groups most at risk like drug users, homosexuals and sex workers.

Andrei Zlobin, the head of Russia's HIV victims association, said that the whole fight against the virus in the country was marked by a lack of efficiency, with contradictory statistics and a lack of a government strategy.

The fight against HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is a major social battle for the Russian authorities in a region where the infection is spreading five times faster than the global average.

But activists have long said that the fight is being impeded by a continued social stigma against the high risk groups like homosexuals and drug users.



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Apple sued over iPhone 4S 'assistant' Siri

SAN FRANCISCO — An iPhone 4S buyer has sued Apple for promising more than it delivered with automated "Siri" voice-activated assistant software built into the coveted smartphones.

A suit filed in a California federal court argued that Apple advertising touting the wonders of Siri amounted to "intentional misrepresentation" and unfair competition, according to documents available online Tuesday.

Lawyers representing a New York City man who bought an iPhone 4S want class action status to represent

millions of people who bought the latest generation Apple smartphone.

The suit included Apple -- which runs showing people asking Siri to help them find restaurants, learn chords to songs, tie neck ties, and even figure out if there is a rodeo in town -- had disappointed some users.

Lawyers representing the iPhone 4S buyer, identified as Frank Fazio of Brooklyn, argued that Siri claims were "misleading and deceptive," and are calling for California-based Apple to pay unspecified damages.

Sci-Tech

Encounters of another kind: meteorite chunk falls on Oslo



An apparent meteorite that split in two after hitting the roof of a cottage in central Oslo.

OSLO (AFP) - A Norwegian family was flabbergasted to find that what appeared to be a piece of a meteorite had crashed through the roof of their allotment garden hut in the middle of Oslo, media reported Monday.

The rock weighing 585 grammes (one pound, four ounces), which split in two, probably detached from a meteorite observed over Norway on March 1, experts said, and had landed on the empty hut in the Thomassen family's allotment in a working-class neigh-

bourhood of the Norwegian capital.

Astrophysicist Knut Joergen Roed Oedegaard and his wife Anne Mette Sannes, a meteorite enthusiast, identified the object as a breccia, or a rock composed of broken fragments of minerals or rock.

"It is a sensation in more than one way. On one hand because it is rare that a piece of meteorite goes through a roof and on the other hand because it is a breccia, which is even harder to find," Sannes told AFP.

She said the owners of the meteorite pieces wanted to keep them in Norway, maybe in a museum.

Meteorites speed through space and generally break up as they enter our atmosphere, but it is extremely rare for the debris to fall on inhabited areas, according to Serge Koutchmy, a researcher at the Paris Astrophysical Institute.

"This family is very lucky," Koutchmy told AFP.

"First off because the piece of meteorite did not cause much damage, but also because it is worth a small fortune," he said.

A meteorite from Mars, for instance, can fetch around 5,000 kroner (670 euros, \$876) per gramme, according to geophysicist Hans Amundsen quoted on the website of the Verdens Gang daily, adding though that it remained unclear where the meteorite pieces that landed in Oslo came from and how rare they were.

L'Oreal backs US non-animal chemical testing



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - L'Oreal has given \$1.2 million to the Environmental Protection Agency to help develop chemical tests which do not involve using animals, the perfume giant and US watchdog announced yesterday.

The Paris-based company announced a research collaboration to study if an EPA toxicity testing system called ToxCast -- which screens chemicals for their possible adverse health effects -- can be used more widely.

As well as the funding, L'Oreal will provide data about chemicals used in its cosmetics, "expanding the types of chemical use groups assessed by ToxCast," it said.

Researchers say treatments for diseases such as diabetes

and polio were made possible through animal research, noting that animals are currently

being used in hepatitis-, HIV- and stem cell-related research, among others.

But animal rights activists continue to bring pressure on laboratories that use animals to develop drugs and vaccines, urging them to stop the practice and use other means to develop the next wonder drug, treatment or cure.

Laurent Attal, executive vice-president L'Oreal Research & Innovation, said: "For more than 30 years, we have invested in Predictive Evaluation for Safety, in other words, animal-free toxicology.



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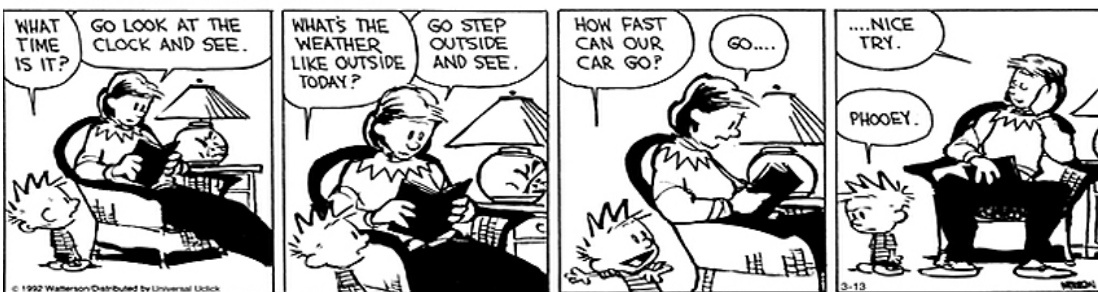
PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBS



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ACROSS

1. Unit of energy
4. District in London
8. Cold desserts
12. Paving goo
13. Greek war god
14. ___ dry eye in the house (2 wds.)
15. Knotted neckwear
16. Bride's wear
17. Penalty indicator
18. Right ___
20. Cowboys' circus
22. 23rd Greek letter
24. Shortstop's shortcoming
27. They're sometimes candied
30. Markdown event (2 wds.)
33. Zsa Zsa's sister
34. Curved letters
35. TV room
36. Strenuous
38. Tree part
39. Taj Mahal location
40. Majors or Marvin
42. Avoid neatly
45. Share an opinion
49. Short skirt
51. Frankenstein's helper
53. Rascalion
54. Loafing about

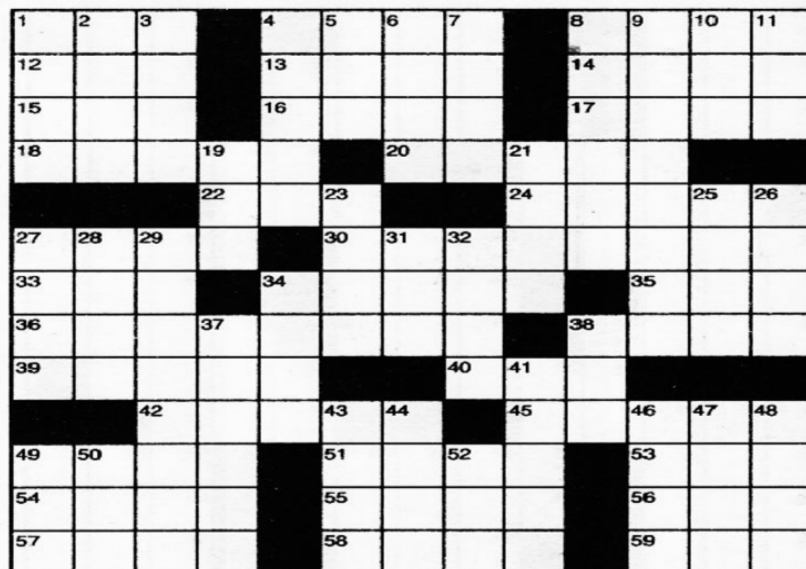
55. "Thing" word
56. Pumpkin ___
57. States
58. Fast jets (abbr.)
59. Had supper

DOWN

1. Blues singer James
2. Drought ender
3. Actor Kinnear
4. Banks money
5. Mined find
6. Bequest receiver
7. Norway's capital
8. Draws a conclusion
9. "Rocky"

10. Seventh Greek letter
11. Wilt
19. Vinyl records (abbr.)
21. Poor grades
23. That being the case (2 wds.)
25. Butter dish pretender
26. Something roommates split
27. Abominable Snowman
28. English river
29. Resembling a young girl
31. Suffix for a

32. Rod's companion
34. Son of Isaac
37. ___ of the valley
38. Standard (abbr.)
41. Deserves
43. Loud noises
44. Senses of self
46. Philbin's co-host
47. Send forth sword
49. Behave or print preceder
50. Director Lupino
52. "Begone!"

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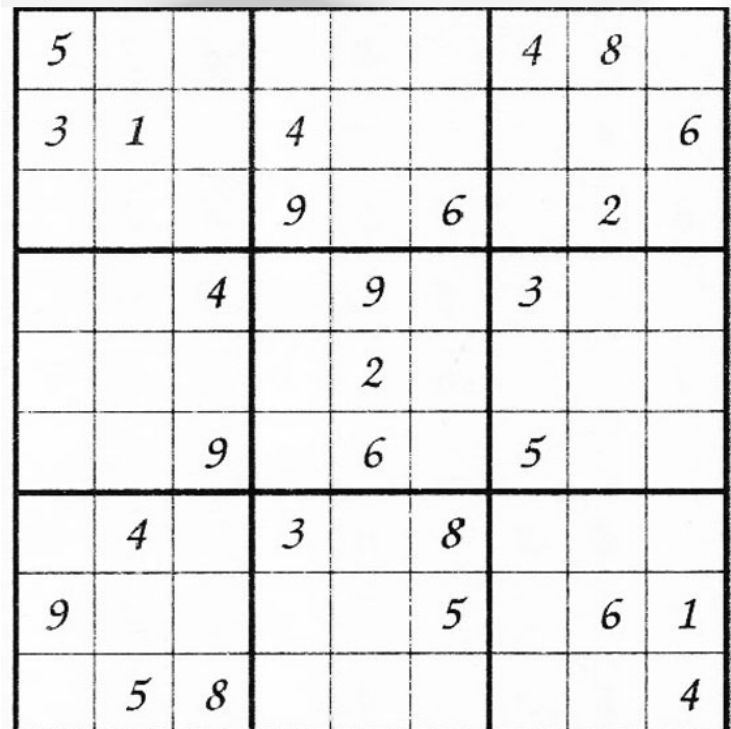
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Horacio Oduber Hospital
Tel. 5274000

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4	5	6	1	9	8	3	2	7
1	9	8	5	3	2	4	6	7
5	6	2	8	7	1	9	3	4
8	3	5	9	6	2	7	1	4
6	1	9	3	2	8	5	4	7
2	7	1	6	5	3	9	8	4
9	2	1	5	6	7	8	3	4
9	5	6	2	8	3	7	1	4
4	8	3	2	1	9	6	5	7

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

Finance

US stocks surge, Dow way over 13,000 mark

NEW YORK (AFP) - US stocks took off Tuesday and the Dow zoomed past the 13,000 mark driven by soaring bank shares, sparked by JP-Morgan Chase's announcement of a huge share buyback and dividend hike.

After a sharp surge higher in the final hour the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed up 217.97 points (1.68 percent) to 13,177.68.

The broad-based S&P 500 gained 24.87 (1.81 percent) to 1,395.96, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite added 56.22 points (1.88 percent) to 3,039.88.

Shares edged up in early

trade helped by a strong showing in February in retail sales data that showed growth picking up to 1.1 percent month-on-month.

The Federal Reserve kept its low interest rate policy in place but acknowledged some improvement in the economy, further helping sentiment.

A final surge came after JP-Morgan announced it had cleared Fed stress tests and would boost its dividend by 20 percent and embark on a \$15 billion share buyback program.

JPMorgan shares added 7.3 percent, dragging the other major banks with it ahead of

the Fed's release of all the stress test results.

Bank of America gained 6.3 percent, Citigroup 6.3 percent, Wells Fargo 5.8 percent, and Goldman Sachs 6.5 percent.

In other blue-chip action, Alcoa surged 4.5 percent, General Electric added 2.6 percent, Caterpillar 3.9 percent, Apple 2.9 percent and eBay 3.0 percent.

Bond prices dropped. The yield on the 10-year Treasury surged to 2.11 percent from 2.03 percent Monday, while the 30-year increased to 3.25 percent from 3.17 percent.

Bond prices and yields move in opposite directions.

Businesses eyeing iPads for the workplace: report

SAN FRANCISCO, March 13, 2012 (AFP) - Survey results released on Tuesday showed that growing numbers of businesses plan to buy iPads as tablet computers make their way from personal lives into work places.

Slightly more than one-in-five companies said they will buy tablets for workers by the middle of this year, with 84 percent of those purchases to be Apple iPads, according to a ChangeWave Research poll.

The results indicated "the

highest level of corporate iPad demand" ever seen in a survey by the US-based, independent research firm.

ChangeWave also found that the pending arrival of a new-generation iPad set for release on Friday has contributed to an "across-the-board decline" in plans by companies to buy tablets made by Apple rivals.

Apple last week unveiled a third-generation iPad enhanced with features aimed at keeping it on top of the boom-

ing tablet computer market.

The new iPad boasts a more powerful processor, eye-grabbing resolution on par with that of an iPhone 4S, and the ability to connect to the latest 4G LTE telecom networks that move data faster than their predecessors.

"We think that iPad is the poster child of the post-PC world," Apple chief executive Tim Cook said at the unveiling, noting that iPad sales topped those of any personal computer maker during the final three months of last year.

Europe 'cannot relax' despite debt crisis easing: Monti

ROME (AFP) - Europe "cannot relax" even though the worst of the debt crisis is over, Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti said on Tuesday at a joint press conference with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

"Following the signing of the fiscal compact, the Euro-

pean Union needs to enter a phase of growth and jobs," Monti said, after 25 of the European Union's 27 member states approved the tighter budget rules last week.

"We want to be firm on budget stability and move towards growth," he said, adding: "It's a constant challenge. Italy has not even over-

come the emergency. We are still busy protecting our country economically and financially."

Merkel stressed the importance of a "balance" in Europe between budget discipline on the one hand and "solidarity" between countries on the other.

She also said the European Stability Mechanism, a permanent eurozone bailout facility that is being put in place, should be used "wisely".

"Everyone has to play their part," she said, adding that Europe's main challenge for the future was to be able to "defend itself" against the growing power of emerging economies and to be able to compete with China.

Merkel also praised Monti, an economics professor and former European commissioner who came to power in November, for implementing "bold" reforms.



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Fed improves view of economy; policy unchanged

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The Federal Reserve slightly upgraded its view of the US economy on Tuesday, saying the jobs market and consumer and business spending had improved since January.

But it kept its ultra-low interest rate and its liquidity-boosting bond repurchase operations in place, citing the depressed housing sector and the lack of inflationary pressures.

The outcome of the March meeting of the Fed's policy-making Federal Open Market Committee was expected, as the central bankers have made clear in recent weeks that the positive signs in the US economy are offset by still-high levels of joblessness, flat incomes and the collapsed housing market.

The brief post-meeting FOMC statement gave no hint as to the Fed's likely policy direction -- further easing monetary conditions or, on the contrary, tightening to beat back inflation pressures -- for the rest of 2012.

Instead, it left in place the rock-bottom 0-0.25 percent interest rate for Fed funds that has been in place for more than three years, and said inflation remains subdued despite the rise in fuel prices.

The committee said that higher oil prices could drive up inflation temporarily, but not enough to push the overall rate higher than what the Fed con-

siders allowable for monetary policy.

Repeating its January stance, the FOMC said it "currently anticipates that economic conditions -- including low rates of resource utilization and a subdued outlook for inflation over the medium run -- are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels for the federal funds rate at least through late 2014."

The Fed appeared not ready to embrace completely Friday's February employment report, which took the monthly average for jobs created to a strong 245,000; or other data showing a surge in consumer spending and a slowdown in layoffs.

But the few positive words on employment were a clear shift from the more downbeat tone of Fed chairman Ben Bernanke's testimony on the economy to Congress on February 29.

At the time he said consumer sentiment and spending capability remained weak and was holding back the economy.

Still, the central bankers gave no hint of the direction of policy, despite months of anticipation that they might embark on a new, third "quantitative easing" program of bond purchases which aims at driving down long-term interest rates to boost industry and the housing market.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

A	I	M	S	P	R	E	C	O	R	K
F	L	I	T	E	O	N	E	L	M	O
B	E	T	A	N	O	G	L	E	S	S
F	A	N	M	A	I	L				
C	R	A	F	T	G	R	O	O	M	S
H	O	U	S	E	D	E	A	H	O	P
A	D	D	B	E	D	A	T	A		
S	E	E	T	E	L	A	K	R	O	N
M	O	N	T	H	S	P	I	E	R	S
R	E	I	G	N	E	D				
B	A	L	I	D	O	E	N	A	S	A
A	S	E	A	E	T	O	A	L	E	S
R	A	I	L	S	O	N	P	I	N	K

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Colombia arrests suspect in Argentine singer death



file photo of Facundo Cabral

BOGOTA (AFP) - Police in Colombia on Tuesday announced the arrest of a man described as the prime suspect in the death of Argentine folk singer Facundo Cabral, fatally shot last year in Guatemala.

The suspect, identified as Costa Rica citizen Alejandro Jimenez, 38, is to be extradited to Guatemala, where he is scheduled to be put on trial on murder charges.

Colombia federal police chief Oscar Naranjo told reporters that Jimenez, also known as "El Palidejo," is a leading suspect in a murder plot that included four alleged accomplices. The accomplices also have been arrested.

"We are checking with the Foreign Ministry as quickly as possible," Naranjo told reporters. "Considering that he was entering (Colombia) with

false documents, it is very likely that he will be expelled from the country immediately."

Jimenez was captured by Colombian police in north-western Colombia at Puerto Punta Albite, where he arrived Saturday morning from Panama on a boat with two Colombians.

Naranjo said Jimenez is suspected of being the "author, prime suspect or mastermind" in the murder of Cabral.

The suspect, a wealthy businessman, also is accused of being a supplier and money launderer for a Mexican drug cartel, Naranjo said. He is being held by police in Bogota pending the extradition proceedings.

Cabral, 74, was killed by gunmen July 9 while on his way to the main international airport in Guatemala.

Guatemalan police said Cabral appears to have been an unintended victim of a murder attempt against businessman Henry Farinas, who had refused to sell nightclubs to Jimenez. Cabral, who Farinas had hired as a performer, was riding in the same car as the businessman when the assassins opened fire.

Farinas was injured but survived and is now a witness in the case.

Argentina held three days of national mourning after Cabral's death. Fans turned up in droves to pay final respects as the singer's coffin was displayed in the theater district of downtown Buenos Aires.

A global nomad who claimed to have visited 150 countries, Cabral's music was largely about peace, love and everyday pleasures and pain.

His songs include the 1970s hit "I'm not from here nor there" and are frequently performed by other Spanish-language performers. He was declared to be a "World Peace Messenger" in 1996 by UNESCO.



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Art sleuths believe long-lost Da Vinci found in Italy



National Geographic fellow Maurizio Seracini (front) and his team view footage captured by the endoscope behind the Vasari wall at Palazzo Vecchio in Florence.

FLORENCE (AFP) - Art sleuths said yesterday they believe they have found traces of a Leonardo Da Vinci masterpiece on a hidden wall in a palace in Florence that has not been seen in over four centuries.

The traces were collected using tiny probes introduced into a wall covering the original surface in a lavish hall in the Palazzo Vecchio and contained a black pigment also used in his "Mona Lisa", project organisers said.

The research is the result of a decades-long quest by San Diego University art history professor Maurizio Seracini, who was featured in Dan Brown's bestseller "The Da Vinci Code" and used cutting-edge technology in the project.

"Although we are still in the preliminary stages of the re-

search and there is still a lot of work to be done to solve this mystery, the evidence does suggest that we are searching in the right place," he said.

The probes also discovered red lacquer and brown pigment on the hidden wall and an air gap between the old wall and the new wall built in front of it.

Historians at a press conference in the Italian city of Florence however stressed their research was "not conclusive" and further chemical analysis needed to be carried out.

Da Vinci began his fresco "The Battle of Anghiari" -- a historic clash in 1440 between Milanese and Florentine forces -- in the Hall of the Five Hundred in 1505 but never finished it because the colours began to run.

The fresco was nevertheless

praised by Da Vinci's contemporaries for what art historian and fellow painter Giorgio Vasari called its "graceful beauty" and Flemish Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens drew a famous copy of it.

The Rubens sketch shows a bloody scene of horsemen battling with swords drawn and trampling over infantry men -- their faces contorted with rage and their muscled horses entwined with eyes bulging out with fear.

Some historians believe Vasari built a wall in front of the fresco so as to preserve Da Vinci's efforts out of respect for the renowned master and then painted his own work, "The Battle of Marciano", on the new wall in 1563.

The research, which was partly sponsored by National Geographic, has been controversial however and has even been investigated by police because researchers bored six small holes into Vasari's work to reach the hidden wall.







**15 MINUTE
ENGLISH
LIFESTYLE &
NEWS SHOW**



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Gold Coast Aruba: Great savings for large families on holiday rentals



Aruba's newest and most innovative gated community has enjoyed steady sales since breaking ground, as many are finding the secure surroundings and outstanding amenities are just what they were looking for before considering purchasing property on the island. Some owners are using the villas or town homes as vacation retreats rather than full time and are taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," noted Gold Coast developer Fito Croes. To assist in the demand for more complete facilities for groups and families, famed hotelier Ed Ma-lone has been placed in charge of the rental program.

Staying at Gold Coast is a very attractive proposition for those traveling with groups that would require multiple hotel rooms. Two and three bedroom Villas or Town Homes accommodate large numbers and offer extensive amenities along with a final cost resulting in considerable savings. The community is minutes to the best beaches and all the casino action, and offers a quiet and secluded getaway with two swimming pools and specialized services with more on the way, such as a fitness room, tennis courts and mini-mall. Ed can arrange maid service, babysitters, caterers, airline pick-up

and drop-off; they even boast a shopping service to stock your shelves before arrival.

Gold Coast accommodations are elegant and spacious, offering privacy for parents or a few couples.

high-speed fiber-optic Internet connection, individual washer/dryer, and are fully air-conditioned. Cribs, high chairs and hair dryers are available for a modest fee. Concierge services to arrange



Beautifully appointed kitchens and bathrooms grace each abode; barbecues and lounges are provided for friendly cookouts and truly savoring the island life. All homes come with cable TV,

rental cars, spa appointments, activities and restaurant reservations are all part of the package.

Check-in for your holiday escape is conducted in the comfort of your vacation home, not while waiting on line at check-in desk. In every way, Gold Coast seeks to pamper their guests while providing them with the feeling of being in a cozy community, not the normally bustling resort, particularly experienced during the major holidays. If you wish an optimal vacation experience with great savings, visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com to get acquainted with the community and the layout, details and availability of accommodations, or call 586-2200 to talk personally to a Gold Coast representative.



Taj Mahal Restaurant, an authentic culinary excursion



When Bharat Shah, originally from India, but now a successful businessman in California, put on a spectacular wedding in Aruba for his daughter Lisa and her groom Kalpesh, they welcomed hundreds of friends and relatives from around the world, including the "old country."

When all the wedding guests had finally arrived in Aruba, Bharat hosted an official welcome party along the shore in Palm Beach, and he chose to have it catered by Taj Mahal restaurant, he was that impressed by their cuisine.

If you like your Indian food authentic, or are looking for a new and unique dining experience, an evening at Taj Mahal will deliver a memorable meal. A seemingly endless menu offers scores of choices for fish, chicken, lamb and vegetarian dishes that are "the real deal;" discover that Indian food goes way beyond curry!

A taste-testing crew from THE MORNING NEWS chose a selection of their singular starters and two main courses with saffron rice, served family style, which provided a fine example of the versatility of their chef.

Taj Mahal's Tai Choice is a great way to start the meal and be initiated into the joys of Indian cuisine, offering a diverse selection of traditional favorites. It contains hearty portions of Pakoras, crispy vegetarian fritters, Aloo Tikki, potato cutlets, Chicken Tikka, tender chicken breast pieces seasoned just right, and shaped and seasoned ground lamb, charmingly dubbed "Sheik Kebabs." All is served on a bed of sliced onions and brought to your table on a sizzling platter, and you will want to dish those sautéed onions on to one of their tasty Indian breads called Naan, leaving behind not a single crumb. Main dishes are accompanied by a choice of rice, mixed vegetables rich with garlic, or Naan, plain, buttered, onion or garlic, and you will want to order an extra basket or two of this tasty delight, on

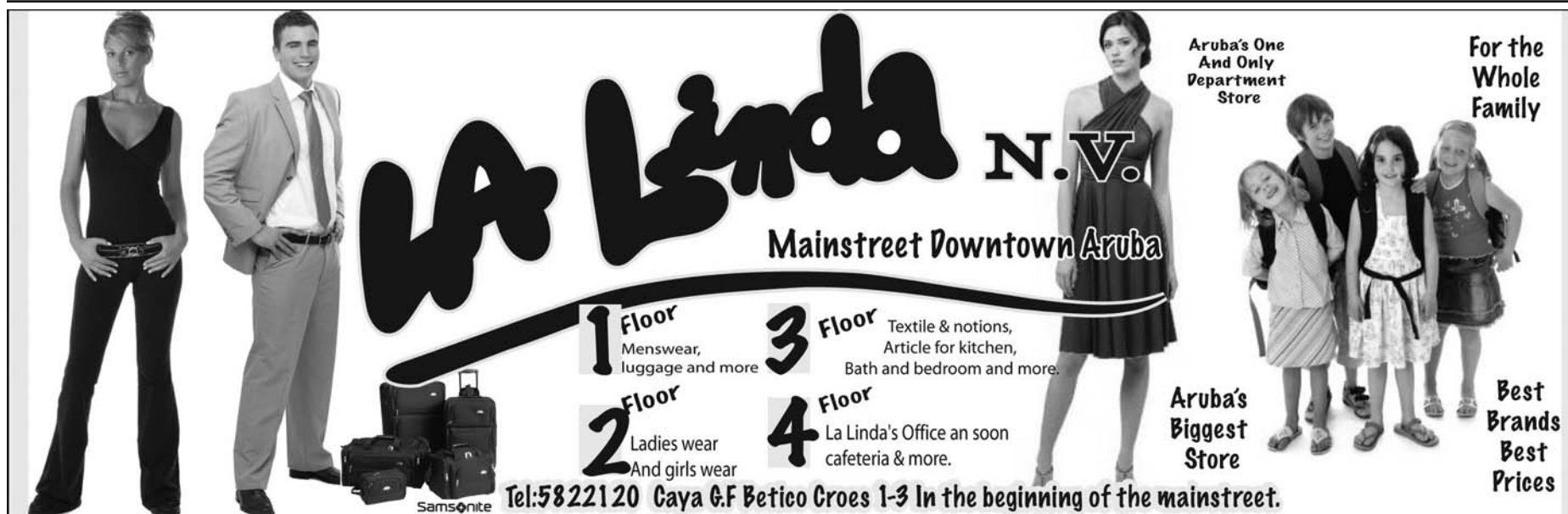
which you can spoon your main course, as well. Poori is crispy fried naan, and most definitely worth the extra two dollars to sample with your meal.

Our group also added an appetizer of crunchy Samosas, the Indian form of a potato knish, served with either cilantro or sweet and sour sauce. A platter of their Jhinga, large, crispy-fried shrimp in a delicate batter is ample enough to serve as a main course, though featured on their appetizer menu.

As we mentioned, main courses are served family style, in beautiful little pots that sit upon a candle to keep them warm. Our group sampled the "Mutton Saagwala," also known as "Lamb Shag" which is cooked in a thick sauce of yogurt and spinach, and the "Fish Hara Masala," moist, tender chunks of fish in a rich sauce featuring cilantro as the main flavoring. This is offered in mild, medium and very spicy, we found the medium quite spicy enough for us; it left a tingle on the tongue.

The family style service allows everyone at the table to sample a bit of this and that, and we heartily recommend you do, to truly appreciate this authentic bit of India in Aruba. Open for lunch and dinner, Taj Mahal sports a cozy and intimate air-conditioned dining room and a small outdoor terrace for those that enjoy dining al fresco. They have an exotic dessert menu to match, but our group was too stuffed to partake; there was even enough left to box up and provide a lunch next day for the lucky first person to get to it!

Located behind the Royal Plaza Mall, across from Aruba's Numismatic Museum, Taj Mahal offers a dining experience that is truly out of the ordinary; they feature an excellent and tasty selection for vegetarians too. If you are a fan of Indian food, or have been toying with trying it, Taj Mahal is the place for a very affordable dining experience and the real deal! Call 588-4494 for reservations.



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SPORTS

Golf: Tiger turns to Shaq to help sell newest video game



NEW YORK (AFP) - Tiger Woods, the injured golf star coming off record sales for his video game last year with help from the Masters, has enlisted ex-NBA star Shaquille O'Neal's help in selling the newest version.

Woods posted a Twitter link on Tuesday to unveil a two-minute video of himself and the massive retired basketball star exchanging kung fu moves before making shots in hyping 'Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13 -- Duel of the Masters'.

"Watch me do battle with @Shaq using the ancient method of Golf-Fu," Woods posted on his Twitter website.

Woods, a 14-time major champion chasing the all-time record of 18 major titles won by Jack Nicklaus, and 'Shaq' used the Xbox 360 Kinect motion sensor to make game swings after elaborate kung fu-style moves.

The video game duel between 'Crimson Cat' Woods and 'Swinging Giant' O'Neal is a nod to older kung fu movies and not unfamiliar to O'Neal, who had a 1990s video game called 'Shaq-Fu'.

Woods, whose new video game for PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 goes on sale on March 27, had the strongest opening sales for any of his video games last year when Augusta National Golf Club allowed its course to be measured and portrayed in a video game -- an unprecedented move for the famed pine-tree-laden lay-out.

That move came after Woods saw his brand name tarnished by the infamous sex scandal that led to his divorce from ex-wife Elin Nordegren, even though video game

maker Electronic Arts Incorporated was among the few sponsors who stuck with Woods after the adultery affair; shoemaker Nike being another.

Woods has not won a tour-sanctioned event since November 2009, just before the exposure of his secret sex life. He battled though left knee and Achilles tendon injuries last year and is on an injury watch this year as well.

Woods withdrew from the final round of a World Golf Championships event last Sunday at Doral complaining of tightness in his left Achilles tendon.

In a Twitter message on Monday, Woods said he has a strained tendon put should be able to return to golf practice late this week and was hopeful of playing as planned in next week's Arnold Palmer Invitational at Bay Hill.

Woods is planning on using Bay Hill as his final tune-up for the Masters, the year's first major championship, which begins on April 5 at Augusta, Georgia

Football: Brazil's Rousseff to meet FIFA president



Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff

BRASILIA (AFP) - Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff will meet with the president of world football governing body FIFA here later this week, both sides said Tuesday.

Friday's fence-mending encounter between Rousseff and FIFA supremo Sepp Blatter aims to put a final end to the row sparked by criticism by FIFA secretary general Jerome Valcke of Brazil's lagging preparations for the 2014 World Cup.

"The main item of the agenda will be the 2014 FIFA World Cup," the football governing body said in a statement, adding that Brazilian sports minister Aldo Rebelo would attend the meeting.

Valcke unleashed a firestorm of protest earlier this month when he said the Brazilian organizers of the 2014 World Cup showpiece needed a "kick up the backside" because preparations were running behind schedule.

FIFA subsequently apologized for Valcke's remarks, which offended Brazilian au-

thorities.

Last Friday Brazil said the affair was now a "closed matter" but FIFA said Valcke would postpone a planned visit to this Latin American powerhouse.

FIFA has for months expressed concern over whether preparations, such as infrastructure projects and renovation or construction of stadiums, are on track for the first World Cup in Brazil since 1950.

Valcke said he profoundly regretted that an incorrect interpretation of his comments had triggered such an angry response from the host country.



FIFA WORLD CUP
Brasil

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Teixeira's departure was "quite a coup" for President Dilma, according to Kfourri.

Lawmaker Alvaro Dias, who investigated the CBF in 2001, meanwhile saw it as an opportunity for the government to gain more space in the organisation of the World Cup.

"The Cup is being organised with public funds, the government must assume its responsibility," he added.

Guterman and other analysts did, however, point to Teixeira's positive legacy, saying he "transformed the national squad into something professional and won two

World Cups (1994 and 2002), while the 2014 Cup in Brazil is a reality".

And the CBF today has 11 sponsors, which pay it \$126 million annually.

But the experts deplored the fact that the national squad only plays abroad, in line with the interests of its sponsors, at the expense of the interests of Brazilian fans.

Brazil's former striker and 1994 World Cup winner Romario, now a lawmaker and a frequent critic of organisational progress for the World Cup, compared the departure of Teixeira to "extirpating a

cancer" and demanded a thorough CBF clean-up, which, he quickly added, was "very difficult, if not impossible".

"Marin (whose term as CBF chief ends in 2015) represents continuity, if not a step backward," the daily Folha de Sao Paulo said in an editorial.

"The overhaul of CBF will be difficult in the coming years."

At least four of Brazil's 27 football federations (Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Minas Gerais and Bahia) have called for immediate elections to choose a new president for the confederation.



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Basketball: Scandal-hit Syracuse loses star big man

SYRACUSE (AFP) - A scandal-plagued season for the Syracuse University basketball team hit a new low on Tuesday when starting center Fab Melo was ruled ineligible for the national championship tournament.

A statement from the school revealed the Orangemen had lost a 7-foot playmaker who averaged 7.8 pts, 5.8 rebounds and 2.9 blocked shots a game in helping Syracuse post a 31-2 regular-season record.

Melo started 30 games at center for the Orangemen, missing three games in late January. During that span, Syracuse averaged 14 fewer points, losing half that production from Melo's inside position.

The loss comes as the Orangemen, who were upset in the Big East Conference tournament, carry a regional top seed into the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) tournament known as "March Madness" that opens this week.

Syracuse is a heavy favorite over North Carolina-Asheville in the opening round and would be expected to defeat Southern Mississippi or Kansas State in round two as well, but their status could slip without Melo.

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NBA: Rose lifts Bulls over struggling Knicks



Baron Davis #85 of the New York Knicks fouls Derrick Rose #1 of the Chicago Bulls at the United Center on March 12

CHICAGO (AFP) - Derrick Rose scored 32 points to power the Chicago Bulls past the New York Knicks 104-99, giving the host Bulls an NBA-best 35-9 record with the 10th victory in their past 11 games.

Carlos Boozer and Taj Gibson each scored 15 points for the Bulls while Joakim Noah added 12 points and 10 rebounds and Gibson grabbed a game-high 13 rebounds for Chicago.

The Knicks suffered their sixth loss in a row and the seventh in their past eight games in falling to 18-24, level with Milwaukee for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

New York was led by 21 points from Carmelo Anthony, 20 points from Amare Stoudemire and 13 points and 10 rebounds from Tyson Chandler.

Jeremy Lin, scored 15 points, passed off eight assists,

blocked three shots and made three steals.

But the Knicks have struggled since Anthony returned from an injury, unable to match the magic Lin mustered when he lineup was injury depleted.

Rose, last season's NBA Most Valuable Player, helped spark the Bulls when the Knicks stayed close at the finish.

Lin sank two free throws to pull the Knicks within 91-88 with 4:33 to play but the Bulls scored eight of the next 10 points, Rose hitting a layup and a slam dunk, to seize the biggest lead of the game at 99-90 with 1:37 to play.

A Chandler layup and Anthony 3-pointer kept the Knicks close into the final seconds, but Kyle Korver sank three late free throws and Gibson slammed in a dunk with seven seconds remaining to seal New York's fate.

NFL: Moss ends retirement to return with 49ers

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Randy Moss, who missed the 2011 NFL season after retiring, has returned to the gridiron by signing a one-year contract to play next season for the San Francisco 49ers.

The move by the 13-year NFL veteran, among the league's all-time leaders in several reception categories, came only hours before Tuesday's start of the NFL's free agency signing period.

Moss, 35, shares second in all-time touchdown catches with 153, ranks ninth in catches with 954 and fifth in receiving yards with 14,858. The six-time Pro Bowl player was greeted at the airport by 49ers coach Jim Harbaugh.

"I was very appreciative of him doing that," Moss said in a posting on the team website. "That just showed me he has a lot of respect for me and I want to give the same in return and that's productivity on that field."

"We had a lot of fun. It's just a pleasure to be able to get back in the league and really get back to what I want to do and that's play football."

In his first season as coach of the 49ers, Harbaugh guided the 49ers to the NFC West division crown. Moss is hopeful that he might finally be able to add the title of Super Bowl champion to his resume by joining the 49ers.

"I know this organization wants the Super Bowl but I've always tried to take it one game at a time," Moss said. "That's a long-term goal for us to get to the Super Bowl, but

first of all, you've got to take it one game at a time, win your division, make the playoffs and then you can look at the end of the road."

Moss last played in 2010 for the New England Patriots, Minnesota Vikings and Tennessee Titans, catching 28 passes for 393 yards and five touchdowns over 16 games.

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"Together we will learn"

Michelle Obama to lead delegation to London Olympics



action," Obama said.

"As the Olympic creed states, 'the most important thing is not to win, but to take part and that doesn't just mean sitting and watching, it means getting up and getting active as well.'"

The White House said it would announce the full delegation in the coming months.

It has been traditional during recent presidencies for first ladies to lead the presidential delegation to the Olympics.

Former first lady Laura Bush traveled to the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy and Hillary Clinton went to the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, while her husband Bill was president.

Obama welcomed Samantha Cameron to the event to mark the London Olympics as President Barack Obama took the British Prime Minister David Cameron to a college basketball game in Ohio.

The couples will be back together on Wednesday night for a state dinner at the White House.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US First Lady Michelle Obama Tuesday announced she would lead the US delegation to the London Olympics, as she celebrated the Games with Samantha Cameron, wife of the British prime minister.

Obama will travel to London for opening ceremonies for the Games which begin on July 27, and tie the event into her "Let's Move!" campaign, designed to inspire young people to lead active lives and adopt healthy diets.

"In the months ahead, I'll be talking to Americans all across the country to encourage even more young people to tap into that Olympic spirit and turn their inspiration into

Tennis: Istomin upsets Ferrer at Indian Wells

INDIAN WELLS (AFP) - Fifth-seeded Spaniard David Ferrer exited the Indian Wells Masters on Tuesday after losing his third-round match to Denis Istomin 6-4, 6-3 at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden.

Ferrer, who had won three titles already this year, suffered just his second loss of 2012 to go with 19 victories. He won tournaments in Auckland, Buenos Aires and Acapulco.

Istomin broke Ferrer in the opening game then won the final five games of the match, breaking Ferrer three times in the second set.

Istomin, who is ranked 51st in the world, fired five aces and won 80 percent of his first-serve points.

Ferrer finished with five aces, three double faults, and won just four of 15 points on his second serve in the 74-minute match.

Istomin advances to the fourth round, where he will play Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro, who beat Fernando

Verdasco 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) on Tuesday.

Istomin reached the final of the San Jose tournament last month, losing to Canadian Milos Raonic.

Del Potro is also off to a roaring start this year, having made the quarter-finals or better at every tournament he has played.

Del Potro survived two set points in the 10th game of the second set against Verdasco before closing it out in the tie-break.

Del Potro hit four aces, won 71 percent of his first serve points and saved all six of his break point chances.

Thomaz Bellucci of Brazil advanced in a walkover when Russian Nikolay Davydenko pulled out with a virus.

American Jamie Hampton had to retire from her fourth-round match with a cramping problem, allowing fifth seed Agnieszka Radwanska to become the first player through to the quarter-finals.

Football: Teixeira exit seen as boon for Brazil's World Cup

RIO DE JANEIRO (AFP) - The resignation of Ricardo Teixeira, the corruption-tainted boss of Brazilian football, marks the end of an era of "absolute power" and brings hopes of a more transparent 2014 World Cup, according to analysts.

"The era of absolute power is over," sports analyst Juca Kfoury, who has been tracking Teixeira's career for years, told sports channel ESPN.

Teixeira, who had led the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) since 1989, handed over his post to his deputy, 79-year-old Jose Maria Marin, on Monday and also resigned as head of Brazil's organizing committee (COL) for the 2014 World Cup.

His 22-year stewardship of CBF was marred by controversy, with repeated calls for his resignation amid allegations of irregularities in Brazil and abroad.

Teixeira, 64, allegedly took millions of dollars worth of bribes in the 1990s from the Switzerland-based ISL sports marketing company that later went bankrupt.

He was also accused of diverting public funds from a friendly match played by Brazil in 2008.

"The CBF is a black box, an impenetrable kingdom," Marcos Guterman, author of the book 'Football Explains Brazil: A Story of the Biggest Popular Expression of the Country', told AFP.

"There was no control. No open accounts, no external auditing. Everything revolved around Teixeira."

"With the departure of a figure so tied to scandals, concentration of power, influence-peddling and back-room dealings, condemned by so many Brazilians, it is possible that the clubs will now conduct themselves in a more transparent and open manner."

"And the World Cup and its organisation may be more transparent."

Marin, who is succeeding Teixeira both as CBF chief and head of COL, vowed to ensure continuity but faced immediate calls for more transparency in the running of the confederation and preparations for the 2014 World Cup, which Brazil is hosting.

Elena Landau, a lawyer and economist specialising in football, said that with the departure of Teixeira, "the CBF must stop being untouchable".

Unlike her predecessor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, President Dilma Rousseff always kept her distance from Teixeira and never granted him an audience.

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